

READING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Founded as an English subscription library in 1763, the Reading Public Library (RPL) is one of the oldest libraries in the United States. Beginning in 1808, it was directly operated by a membership association known as the Reading Library or Reading Library Company. The Library was offered to the City of Reading in 1898 and became a free public institution from that time on. The Main Library's construction was funded through the generosity of American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and opened its doors to the public on June 9, 1913. RPL's now modernized Main Library at 5th & Franklin Streets is the major resource center for public library services throughout Berks County.

RPL is the local public library for the city of Reading and consists of a Main Library, three Branches, and City Bookmobile service. It is also the Resource Library and state-designated District Library Center (DLC) for Berks County, operating the ALIN (Advanced Library Information Network) consortium which provides automation services to public, academic, and special libraries throughout the county. RPL is a member of Berks County Public Libraries (BCPL), a federated system created in 1986 which includes all county public libraries but Wyomissing. In its role as the DLC, RPL provides a variety of services, including reference and interlibrary loan coordination, to all state-funded public libraries in the Reading District, including Wyomissing.

The Reading Public Library allows access to the Internet at each of its facilities and connection to its online catalog through both dial access and the World Wide Web. Numerous library materials are now web accessible via RPL's website (www.reading.lib.pa.us), including the POWER (Pennsylvania Online World of Electronic Resources) Library provided by the state.

RPL has been aggressive in its pursuit of technology grants in recent years. A 1995 Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title I Grant funded a CD-ROM based local area network (LAN) installation. In 1997, RPL implemented an LSCA Title II grant to upgrade the LAN and expand public access to the Internet with Pentium level workstations. A 1996 LSCA Title III grant for the Reading-Berks Area Resource Network (R-BARN) project (which included ALIN members and Albright College) provided licensing for databases of full-text magazine articles (including those in the Spanish language) and other electronic resources.

In 1998, RPL received \$171,000 in Library Pen/Connect technology grant funding. Services implemented in 1999 included access to the online ALIN catalog via the Internet, library and public access to the POWER library databases, and the creation of a Wide Area Network (WAN) connecting all BCPL members. Federal E-Rate discounts

awarded to RPL and other BCPL libraries, beginning in 1998, helped finance the construction of the WAN and should greatly reduce future telecommunications costs into the 21st century. The year 2000 saw the receipt of a grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation valued at \$255,850 for the purchase and placement of multiple public Internet workstations and a printer in each of the BCPL library facilities, as well as a system-wide training facility at the Main Library. A \$25,900 BerksNet grant in 2001 added Internet computers in high need areas for children, minorities, and seniors. In 2002, an LSTA grant of \$55,000 helped to replace older equipment with new PC=s and add the capability for interaction with other online library catalogs in Berks County.

Despite the recent emphasis on technology, lending books to both adults and children has been and continues to be the primary service provided by Reading Public Library. The Library also circulates audio-visual materials, including videos and books-on-tape. Other services offered by the Reading Public Library include an active program of providing reference assistance, both in person and over the telephone. To insure that young people are introduced to a love of reading and books, the library provides tours for students and story hour programs for younger children throughout the school year at all facilities and also operates a reading program during the summer.

Each week RPL provides 65 hours of service through the Main Library, 35 hours of service through each of the three Branches, and 20 hours of service through the City Bookmobile. RPL=s workforce is composed of approximately 27 full-time employees assisted by more than 30 part-time employees (paid directly by the Library Board) and a multitude of community volunteers. Thirty percent of library personnel costs are paid by the Library Board, not the City.

In addition to common public library services, RPL also provides numerous specialized services. The Reading Public Library has been a selective depository of government documents for the 6th U.S. Congressional District since 1901. Professional library staff select government publications expected to be useful to the general public and to special interest groups such as students and business people. RPL acquires approximately 18% of available depository materials at no charge but bears a significant cost in terms of housing and making them available. Since 1996 electronic records for these documents have been downloaded in the ALIN system, making government publications as accessible to the public as other library materials through the online catalog.

In cooperation with the Foundation Center in New York City, the Reading Public Library has recently established an affiliated Foundation Center Collection that assists local nonprofit organizations in identifying sources of grants and foundation funding. RPL is also a member of and works with the Berks County Chamber of Commerce, assists it in research, and provides access to information for business.

The Reading Public Library is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of 5 appointees from the City of Reading, 5 appointees from the Reading Library Company, and 5 appointees from the County of Berks. The Reading Library Company and the City had essentially been partners through a long-standing legal agreement that provided for shared responsibility in the governance of the Reading Public Library. The year 1999 marked the 100th anniversary of the date the City took official ownership of library facilities and materials and coincidentally also marked the beginning of participation by the County of Berks in RPL=s funding. Through an arrangement in which Berks County began paying most of the City=s library personnel costs, the County received appointment authority for five RPL Trustees from the City in 2001.

The Board of Trustees operates according to its own by-laws which require officers and committees. The officers consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The RPL Board meets monthly and provides direction to the library administration on policy and planning issues, oversees budgetary matters and financial management, and serves as a funding advocate for the institution.

There are four (4) programs presently functioning within the Library:

Administrative Services provides support for and management of all Library programs.

Branch, Circulation & Technical Services involves material acquisition, processing, collection management, and the circulation, tracking and maintenance of materials for the Main Library and all branch library facilities, as well as interlibrary loan.

Reference & General Services provides access to information through books, periodicals, government documents, online services, the internet, CD-ROM, and AV resources. It also includes bookmobile, custodial, security, volunteer, and special electronic services.

Children=s Services is comprised of a special collection for children, library programs, and coordinated activities with the Reading School District and other groups.

PROGRAM 1: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The daily operations of the Library are managed and leadership for the library staff is provided by Administrative Services. The administrative team develops the budgets and operational plans and establishes programs as directed by the Library Board of Trustees. Administrative Services recommends library policies governing circulation and collections to the Board for its approval and sees that the policies and rules are adhered to by all patrons. Reports are produced for the City of Reading, Berks County Public

handles all human resource issues with assistance from the City Human Resources Department. Since almost all full-time employees of the Library are City of Reading employees, in general, the policies of the City apply to these library staff members and part-time employees of the Library Board.

The administration establishes goals, strategies and program objectives under supervision of the Board of Trustees. Working closely with the Berks County Public Libraries is also a key role of the administrative team. In addition, the administration carries out a variety of duties for the Reading Public Library in its state-mandated capacity as the District Library Center (DLC) for Berks County. The purpose of a DLC is to provide support and assistance to other libraries in the district, such as reference and interlibrary loan services, specific funding is received from the state to carry out these responsibilities.

Currently there are 4 full time employees in Administrative Services. The overall operational responsibility is assigned to the Director of the Reading Public Library who also serves as DLC Administrator. This position reports directly to the Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library and works closely with the City of Reading administration, the Berks County Public Libraries system office, and its Board of Trustees. It also oversees administration of the annual District Library Center budget in conjunction with the DLC Advisory Council which is comprised of BCPL member library trustees and staff. One Assistant Director position focuses on personnel administration and coordination of the branches while the other focuses on support services and technology for RPL, other BCPL members, and the rest of the ALIN libraries. The Administrative Coordinator provides executive support to the Director, Assistant Directors and Board of Trustees.

**FY 2007
PROGRAM
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 1: INSURE THE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES WITH
QUALITY AND AT THE LOWEST COST.**

Objective 1: Work with BCPL to continue daily delivery at all county locations. January 2007.

Objective 2: Review processes for cost savings and revenue enhancement. December 2007.

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**GOAL 2: MANAGE THE COLLECTION TO INSURE THAT MATERIALS
REFLECT THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

Objective 1: Maintain and increase levels of outreach programs and materials for preschoolers as personnel allows. December 2007.

GOAL 3: ACQUIRE, RETAIN, AND DEVELOP AN EXPERIENCED AND PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY STAFF.

Objective 1: Provide 6 hours of continuing education classes or workshops every two years for all library staff members working at least 20 hours per week. December 2007.

Objective 2: Continue the annual employee service awards program. January 2007.

Objective 3: Conduct an annual in-service day for staff development. November 2007.

Objective 4: Provide specialized customer service training for all full-time circulation staff as well as ongoing public service training for all library staff members, both full and part-time. March 2007.

GOAL 4: ESTABLISH STRATEGIC GOALS AND LONG RANGE OBJECTIVES TO CARRY THE LIBRARY'S PROGRAMS FORWARD.

Objective 1: Review and revise strategic plan, with major goals and objectives. October 2007.

GOAL 5: ENHANCE LIBRARY SUPPORT THROUGH APPROACHES TO FUNDING.

Objective 1: Per 1999 agreement, support the City of Reading and Berks County officials to ensure library personnel and operations budgets attain optimum levels. August 2007.

Objective 2: Devise a plan for the housing and consolidation of acquisitions, computerization, technical, and other services with the Berks County Public Libraries, and establish a timetable for its implementation. December 2007.

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Objective 3: Work with the Reading Public Library Foundation to develop a plan for raising both building and collection development funds through large donations, bequests, living wills, etc. June 2007.

Objective 4: In conjunction with governmental entities and a variety of other agencies, attempt to raise funds for the improvement and expansion of Main Library programs and facilities.

Goal 6: ANALYZE THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY TO BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC AND MARKET THE LIBRARY.

Objective 1: Continue promoting the Reading Public Library and other public libraries in Berks County in cooperation with Berks County Public Libraries. February 2007.

Objective2: Use AA Case for Facility Expansion@ developed through the Leadership Berks program, to lay groundwork for public discussion of a building plan for RPL. May 2007.

Expenditures	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	2007 Budget
Personnel	459,593	544,191	141,306
Operating	586,327	757,225	0

PROGRAM 2: BRANCH, CIRCULATION & TECHNICAL SERVICES

Through this program, materials are acquired, processed and checked out to the public and back into the library, while constantly being tracked by the ALIN system. Materials are acquired from a variety of sources and are made ready for circulation to the public by being individually processed and cataloged. The key component of this activity is RPL=s integrated library automation system database, which serves as a core resource for the support of public libraries throughout Berks County; the County Bookmobile; the Council on Chemical Abuse; RACC, Alvernia College; and Berks Technical Institute. The centralized database, which surpassed 700,000 items in 2002, allows patrons at any of the participating libraries to see what materials are available at any of the libraries and whether items are available for checkout. The Reading Public Library receives fees for these services. The automation system allows for the tracking of materials, efficient notification regarding overdue materials, and collection of appropriate fees.

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RPL acquires a wide variety of book, audiovisual, computer, and other specialized materials (such as large-print books) for its collections. Circulation at the Reading Public Library has risen tremendously in recent years. The number of city residents using the library has doubled in the past 5 years. This may be attributed to an improved children=s collection,

the overall improved quality of service, outreach to the Latino community, and increased security within the library. Recent improvements have made the Main Library and Branches warmer and more pleasant places in which to browse and study. Staff development has also created a much friendlier place for patrons. The improvement and expansion of the library's collections with more current and popular materials, including audiovisual items, have contributed to the improved circulation as well. Access to the Internet and computer workstations for the public have also brought more individuals into the library. The one negative is that the Main Library is becoming increasingly crowded with new users and is desperately in need of expansion or relocation because no new space has been added to the structure since the Carnegie building was completed in 1913.

**FY 2007
PROGRAM
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL 1: ACQUIRE AND PROCESS MATERIALS AT LOWEST COST AND INSURE RAPID AND EFFICIENT CATALOGING OF MATERIALS.

Objective 1: Improve response times, simplify tasks, maximize use of personnel and technology, and eliminate duplicate efforts to improve service and reduce costs. July 2007.

Objective 2: Investigate other suppliers for better services and discounts. November 2007.

GOAL 2: MAINTAIN AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES LOW COST, RAPID, AND EFFICIENT PROCESSING/CIRCULATION OF MATERIALS.

Objective 1: Keep automated computer system updated with latest release software. January 2007.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE THE ONLINE CATALOG TO BETTER REFLECT THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTION.

Objective 1: Make the Berks Authors collection available online. December 2007.

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Objective 2: Make Berks County holdings information on periodicals available online. December 2006.

Expenditures	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	2007 Budget
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Personnel	456,479	572,600	492,088
Operating	89,631	127,274	100,000

PROGRAM 3: REFERENCE & GENERAL SERVICES

The focus of any library is its collection and the ability of patrons to access the collection and related services. The automation system is the resource which enables the cataloging and circulation of these materials. The actual access, however, is provided through the operation of library facilities and the staffing of those facilities with qualified personnel.

The Reading Public Library serves a broad cross section of people within the city of Reading and throughout Berks County. Information is made available through the circulation of book, audiovisual, and other materials, along with access to reference, periodical, and various other special collections. The mission of the Library is to provide materials which are current or in demand, support students or those pursuing lifelong learning, and assist in the preservation of local history and culture. The major function of library employees is the provision of these services to the public. Though most staff members are able to give routine directional help, the vast majority of research and informational support is given to patrons by professionally trained reference librarians. These individuals hold master's degrees in the field of library and information science, and have expertise in technology too.

The Reading Public Library maintains a very impressive collection of reference materials and serves as the central resource library for the County of Berks. The provision of online services, CD-ROM resources, and Internet access has become a very important part of the library's reference services. Reference media requires a significant investment in personnel, hardware, software and other material. There are special collections for local and family history, government documents, and the support of grant writing as well.

The acquisition and development of the library collection is guided by a collection management plan that focuses on being responsive to and representative of the community and its information needs. This collection plan involves the assessment of circulation information and the projected needs of the community. The library collection is reviewed regularly by professional staff members to determine what materials are required, based upon collection development needs, public demand, and patron requests. The collection is purged regularly to eliminate old, outdated, and worn out materials. For a library the size of RPL's (approximately 300,000 volumes), 7 to 12% of the collection would require

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replacement or upgrading each year. This represents 21,000 to 36,000 items per year. With current resources, the library is able to fund only a minimum of that requirement. A Foundation for the Reading Public Library has been formed to generate additional private

funding to help address this pressing need and the need for additional facility space and renovations.

Throughout the year the library conducts appropriate workshops and programs which are co-sponsored with the Friends and various other organizations. The operation of the branch system and the Main Library is supplemented by a staff of part time workers who are paid by the RPL Board. The Special Projects/Volunteer Coordinator, a position also funded by the RPL Board, provide services of inestimable worth. Each Branch Library is provided with a collection that reflects the needs and requests of the patrons who frequent that branch. The ability to deliver library materials into the neighborhoods of Reading has always been a key part of the library=s success and focus on customer service. A new City Bookmobile, funded in part with \$25,000 in City CDBG funding and \$25,000 from the County Office of Aging, was put into service in 1999 with expanded routes and stops for children, the disadvantaged and seniors.

**FY 2007
PROGRAM
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**GOAL 1: PROVIDE CONVENIENT PUBLIC ACCESS TO ALL FACILITIES
AND MATERIALS AS WELL AS A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE
ENVIRONMENT.**

Objective 1: Analyze safety, emergency and security issues and set policies to better protect collections and create a safer environment for the public and staff. June 2007.

Objective 2: Investigate better lighting and signage at all locations. April 2007.

Objective 3: Increase City Bookmobile outreach to children by working with the City, schools, literacy groups, and other subsidized programs. January 2007.

**GOAL 2: PROVIDE FAST, EFFICIENT, AND RESPONSIVE CUSTOMER
SERVICE IN LOCATING MATERIALS FOR CUSTOMERS.**

Objective 1: Establish customer service and other continuing education opportunities for reference staff. May 2007.

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**GOAL 3: PROVIDE A REFERENCE COLLECTION AND REFERENCE
SERVICES THAT ARE OUTSTANDING IN QUALITY AND
RESPONSIVENESS.**

Objective 1: Purchase multiple copies of GED, career choice, job testing, resume writing, and other similar materials as new or replacement items. March 2007.

Objective 2: Train reference staff members to deliver, and base part of their evaluations on their ability to perform technology-based services. June 2007.

GOAL 4: PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MATERIALS IN A VARIETY OF MEDIA TO INSURE THAT THE COLLECTION IS READILY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

Objective 1: Increase acquisitions funds for the audiovisual collection to support demand. January 2007.

GOAL 5: PROVIDE INCREASED PUBLIC ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES.

Objective 1: Continue to evaluate and improve the scope of library resources available via the Internet with improved accessibility to all patrons both within and outside the Library. July 2007.

Objective 2: Evaluate and refine book collections available on the RPL online catalog. September 2007.

Objective 3: Develop a brochure marketing reference sources and services available to other libraries in the Reading District and to the public.

GOAL 6: MAINTAIN A QUALITY REFERENCE COLLECTION REFLECTING THE DIVERSITY OF THE COMMUNITY.

Objective 1: Evaluate collection management plan through collection analysis. March 2007.

Objective 2: Re-examine online access to Spanish language materials. July 2007.

Objective 3: Develop a Spanish language materials collection development plan. July 2007.

Objective 4: Produce a new Spanish language version of the RPL website. July 2007.

Expenditures	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	2007 Budget
Personnel	426,637	491,765	461,723
Operating	0	0	0

PROGRAM 4: CHILDREN SERVICES

There have been significant improvement and expansion of the children's collection with good public support for the children=s collection and the hiring of new personnel. Summer reading and other programs have been successful, including outreach efforts at area department stores and in schools and other locations. RPL=s Young Poets Contest, for example, has had participation by more than 2200 students in grades 1 through 12 throughout Berks County.

The Main Children=s Services staff works closely with the Branches and other agencies to promote reading and the use of the library and to introduce young people to the library and its resources. Registration for library cards by children has doubled in 1997 and continues at an excellent pace.

The Children=s Department of the Main Library is a warm and inviting place which allows children to read and study in their own reading areas and computer workstations in an environment totally removed from the adult areas.

A three-year summer outreach partnership effort with the Evenstart Family Literacy Program, the City Recreation Department, and the Reading School District began in the year 2000 and has continued. It provides educational activities and resources for pre-school children through 14 year olds and their families.

An effort is being made to reach out to teens as well with the establishment of our first Young Adult Librarian position, which was filled in 2001. The Young Adult Librarian has worked closely with adolescents to make the Library more sensitive to their needs and has created a separate Young Adult area for teens.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY CHILDREN'S COLLECTION SUPPORTED BY EXCELLENT PROGRAMMING.

- Objective 1: Improve the variety and the currency of the children's collection. December 2007.
- Objective 2: Increase the number of materials that are reflective of the diversity of the City and library patrons. December 2007.
- Objective 3: Expand the number of children's programs in the inner city with special emphasis on extension activities through the Summer Reading Program. May 2007.
- Objective 4: Establish a Young Adult Advisory Board which will be composed of teens who are representative of the community as a means of enhancing programs and services for youth. January 2007.

GOAL 2: PROVIDE A SAFE AND INVITING PLACE FOR CHILDREN TO READ AND ENJOY PROGRAMMING WITH THEIR PARENTS.

- Objective 1: Survey children and parents for ideas to improve the children's programs and services. May 2007.
- Objective 2: Develop programs for babies and toddlers modeled after the Family Place library programs approach, in cooperation with various related community agencies. January 2007.
- Objective 3: Establish a Baby Lap Sit program for babies and their parents or legal guardians, geared for babies 12-24 months old. January 2007.
- Objective 4: Expand the young adult collection, as space needs permit, with more shelving, reading and seating areas and place emphasis on computer access. October 2007.

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GOAL 3: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A QUALITY PARTNERSHIP WITH THE READING SCHOOL DISTRICT AND WITH COUNTY SCHOOLS TO INSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE INTRODUCED TO LIBRARY FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND COLLECTIONS.

- Objective 1: Continue to work with the Reading School District to insure that every student in grades K-6 has the opportunity to obtain a library card and is provided with information about the Reading Public Library. August 2007.
- Objective 2: Increase the number of children in the schools who receive an introduction to and visit to the public library. December 2007.
- Objective 3: Continue to work with the City Department of Recreation and the Penn State Extension Center to provide training on working with young children and the summer reading program for the City=s camp counselors. April 2007.
- Objective 4: Continue to work in partnership with the City of Reading Department of Recreation to issue library cards and provide the literacy component for the camp program through the summer reading program at the Library. April 2007.
- Objective 5: Continue to partner and seek joint programs with local schools to promote the POWER Library.

Expenditures	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	2007 Budget
Personnel	90,450	96,767	130,426
Operating	0	0	0